



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Supervisor David F. Bowen, District 10

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STATEMENT OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY SUPERVISOR DAVID F. BOWEN ON THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OPPOSITION TO A "LIVING WAGE" ORDINANCE

"I'm disappointed that the County Executive has resorted to spreading misinformation regarding my proposal to replace poverty wages in Milwaukee County with a Living Wage ordinance.

"His claims that we would destroy such programs as Family Care or that we are hindering economic development in Milwaukee County are completely false. He says that research shows proposals such as this create an island in which it is more difficult to provide the necessary services.

"The County Executive wants the public to believe he cares about the working poor and that he is fighting for them by using his lobbying power to win support for increasing the minimum wage at the state and federal levels.

"But I'd like to expose the reality of the situation. The reality is that Gov. Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled Legislature have no interest in passing anything that favors the working poor. Tax cuts that favor big business and the rich have been their only focus while increasing the wages of low-wage workers is characterized as a misguided political stunt. A state minimum wage increase will simply not happen.

"A minimum wage increase of \$10.10 presented by President Obama is a start, but unfortunately it does not go far enough and only affects private contractors doing business with the federal government. The reality is a broader federal minimum wage increase will not happen as long as Republicans control the U.S. House of Representatives.

"What I am proposing is not a miracle. We simply are asking for local elected officials to make a decision on the impact of local government-controlled funds. Big businesses that profit with tax dollars continue to increase their executive pay while workers on the bottom get minimal pay increases every few years. Growing poverty, foreclosed homes and hungry families are the very things that are tearing down this community. A living wage can help to address these problems in Milwaukee County.

"We cannot wait for state action. We cannot wait for federal action. We need County action, and the County Executive can do better than to oppose a County Living Wage ordinance that will pass the County Board and will truly benefit those at the bottom of the economic ladder."

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